

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 OPR-02 SY-05 HA-05 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /062 W

-----021813 051531Z /46

O 051518Z JUL 78

FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4497

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL, SOPN

SUBJECT: THOUSANDS THROG TO CANCELLED ROCK CONCERT

REF: LENINGRAD 01890

FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED BY FRENCH
CONSUL GENERAL, WHO LIVES NEAR PALACE SQUARE, AND TWO
AMERICAN RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE STUDENTS WHO WERE ON SQUARE
FROM 7:30 TO 10:00 P.M.

-- ACCORDING FRENCH CG, AROUND 10:00 P.M. THERE WERE
15 ARMY TRUCKS WITH WHAT APPEARED TO BE RAW RECRUITS
DRAWN UP OUTSIDE THE M.V.D. BUILDING, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND
IS CITY CENTER FOR CIVIL DISTURBANCES, ON KHALTURINA
BEHIND AND DOWN THE STREET FROM HERMITAGE. FRENCH CG ALSO
PERSONALLY SAW HOW POLICE IN SQUAD CARS QUITE LATE AT
NIGHT WERE CHASING UP ONTO PAVEMENT SMALL GROUPS OF
STUDENTS STROLLING AWAY FROM THE SQUARE. IN THE AREA OF
MORE DUBIOUS INFORMATION, TWO SWISS GIRLS TOLD FRENCH THAT
TEAR GAS GRENADES HAD BEEN THROWN. FRENCH CG ALSO THOUGHT
HE PICKED UP REFERENCE TO GRENADES IN OVER-HEARD CONVER-
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SATION LATE IN EVENING. SWISS ALSO REPORTED THAT TRACTS
HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED AND BOTTLES THROWN AT VEHICLES.

-- NEWLY ARRIVED AMERICAN STUDENTS ESTIMATED CROWD
AT 5 TO 10,000 MOSTLY TEEN-AGERS. AT 8:15 P.M., 8 TO 10
POLICE CARS AND ABOUT 100 POLICEMEN BEGAN EFFORTS TO DIS-
PERSE CROWD, WITHOUT EFFECT. SPRINKLER TRUCKS WERE THEN

USED WITH EQUAL LACK OF SUCCESS. THEN ABOUT 9:00 P.M., POLICE, INCLUDING VEHICLES, CHARGED THE CROWD, KNOCKING SOME 50 TO 100 TO THE GROUND AT RANDOM WHERE THEY WERE PICKED UP AND HUSTLED AWAY IN PADDY WAGONS. STUDENTS SAW NO EVIDENCE OF TRACTS OR TEAR GAS. (COMMENT: CONGENOFF AT 10:30 CERTAINLY DID NOT FIND ANY TRACES OF TEAR GAS ON ANY OF THREE SIDES OF SQUARE WHICH HE VISITED, BUT FRENCH CG THOUGHT HE HEARD EXPLOSIONS QUITE A BIT LATER AT NIGHT, SO THAT CONCEIVABLY TEAR GAS WAS USED WHEN SPECTATORS HAD LEFT, TO BREAK UP SOME REMAINING HARD CORE.)

-- SLIGHTLY REVISED VERSION FROM IREX STUDENT OF WHAT SOVIET FRIEND TOLD HER WAS THAT GROUP DID NOT RPT NOT CARRY PLACARD, BUT HAD CHARGED UP NEVSKIY IN DIRECTION OF ADMIRALTY SHOUTING "WE WANT FREEDOM" (MY KHOTIM SVOBODA). AMERICAN STUDENTS ON SQUARE REPORT, ON OTHER HAND, THAT THE CROWD WAS SHOUTING "SANTANA, SANTANA" (ONLY AMERICAN PERFORMER MENTIONED TO CONGENOFF WAS ALSO SANTANA, NOT BAEZ OR BEACH BOYS). SO IT IS PERHAPS MORE PLAUSIBLE THAT CROWD WAS SHOUTING "WE WANT SANTANA" AND SOMEWHAT DISSAFFECTED SOVIET WOMAN, WHO HAD NEVER HEARD OF SANTANA, TRANSFERRED SHOUT WISHFULLY INTO "SVOBODA". HEAVENS KNOWS WHAT PARANOID MILITIA OFFICIALS MAY HAVE HEARD. BUCHANAN

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